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RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3428
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1196
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUL 4918
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9548
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1976
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 1949
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [REL](#) [PINR](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: GOP FED UP, WITHDRAWS AMBASSADOR TO BOLIVIA

REF: LIMA 1012

Classified By: Amb. P Michael McKinley for reasons 1.b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: The GOP on June 30th indefinitely recalled its Ambassador to Bolivia in response to an appeal by President Evo Morales for the Peruvian people to rise up in protest against an imaginary US base in Peru and to support a planned July 9 national strike. President Alan Garcia on July 1st publicly justified this decision in blunt terms: "As (King) Juan Carlos of Spain said, why don't you shut up, worry about your own country and stay out of mine!" Our Foreign Ministry contacts say that Morales's comments are only the latest in a series of conflicts between Lima and La Paz. Our contacts also note that some in the MFA believe that Evo has established a pattern of criticizing the GOP whenever he suffers a political setback at home. End Summary.

Peru Withdraws Ambassador to Bolivia

¶2. (C) The GOP on June 30th recalled indefinitely its Ambassador to Bolivia in response to an appeal by President Evo Morales for the Peruvian people to rise up in protest against an imaginary US base in Peru. Our Foreign Ministry contacts tell us that the administration has tried to ignore Morales's previous criticisms of the Garcia government, but Morales's calls for protests inside Peru crossed a serious red line and GOP officials are angry. The MFA's Undersecretary for the Americas Nestor Popolizio complained to our DCM that the Bolivians do not recognize the codes and limits of diplomatic relations and this latest incident could not be ignored. He added that the GOP was considering implementing additional concrete (but unspecified) steps to demonstrate their seriousness to the Bolivians. Vice-Minister Gutierrez confirmed this possibility in a conversation with the Ambassador. Defense Minister Flores Araoz and Army General Donayre also supported the hard line in talks with the Ambassador, with the Ambassador expressing concerns about possible Bolivian support for a planned July 9 general strike.

Garcia to Evo: "Why Don't you Shut Up!"

¶3. (C) President Alan Garcia on July 1st publicly justified the decision to withdraw his Ambassador in blunt terms: "As (King) Juan Carlos of Spain said, why don't you shut up, worry about your own country and stay out of mine!" Responding specifically to Evo's appeal for protests, Garcia declared: "No country has the right to interfere in the

internal politics of another, and that Evo is encouraging the July 9th strike is genuinely repulsive and should be denounced internationally." Garcia added that Evo had based his attacks on "gross lies and manipulation, like saying that Peru has a United States base. Mr. Morales should come here and say where the base is. Or even better, he should stay out of Peruvian politics and stop dividing the Peruvian people."

A Series of Complaints Against Bolivia

14. (C) Peru's Bolivia desk officer at the Foreign Ministry Antonio Santivanez told poloff that Morales's comments are only the latest in a series of conflicts between Lima and La Paz. One of the most difficult has been Bolivia's intransigence in negotiating trade deals at the Andean Community (CAN; Ref A). The only reason Bolivia would have opted into negotiations with the European Union and then sought at every turn to block a deal was to cause problems for Bolivia's neighbors, said Santivanez. The same applies to Peru's implementation of its free trade agreement with the United States and Bolivia's refusal to give Peru a waiver on CAN intellectual property rights regulations. According to Santivanez, everyone knows that Peru will move ahead with the trade agreement regardless of the CAN, and no one wants to undermine the CAN -- so why is Bolivia being intransigent?

15. (C) Santivanez also discussed a seemingly minor economic dispute that erupted in March and almost led to the closure to trade of the border with Bolivia. Bolivian transportation union leaders in Copacabana, Bolivia, provoked the dispute when they "ordered" Peruvian transport companies operating on the route to Copacabana to stop entering Bolivian territory and leave travelers at the border for Bolivian buses to retrieve them. When the Peruvians refused to comply, the Bolivians hijacked the buses and refused to return them even after negotiation between GOP and GOB officials. Lima finally gave the GOB a 72-hour ultimatum to return the buses and reestablish normal transport routes or the GOP would invoke bilateral agreements and cut off border trade. The Bolivians complied with only hours to spare. Asked if the GOP has considered closing border trade in the current dispute, Santivanez replied that such ultimatums work better with micro-disputes and risk spiraling out of control when used in macro-disputes like the current one. He added that the MFA does not like to resort to threats and only did so in this case because Evo does not respond to normal diplomatic measures.

Speculating on Morales's Behavior

16. (C) Santivanez told poloff that some in the MFA believe that Evo has established a pattern of criticizing the GOP whenever he suffers a political setback at home. He noted that Evo's call for protests came right before Bolivia's Chuquisaca department elected an opposition prefect, and that his last criticism came shortly after Beni voted for its autonomy statutes. (Poloff responded that the USG has certainly experienced a similar pattern.) Santivanez then speculated that perhaps Morales coordinates his messages with Venezuelan President Chavez and is serving as Chavez's "attack dog" while Chavez himself temporarily and tactically cools his rhetoric. He cited as evidence Chavez's frequent conversations with Morales as well as a private lunch the two held during a recent Lima summit.

Comment: GOP Seeking Common Cause with USG?

17. (C) The Bolivia desk officer admitted to poloff that some unspecified Latin American diplomats had called to say they thought the GOP's reaction to Morales was exaggerated. He added that their Brazilian and Argentine contacts regularly claim that everything in Bolivia is fine, and that the Chileans seem to have a good relationship with Morales. Our Foreign Ministry contacts also stressed that they share common interests with the USG in Bolivia and hinted that they would like to coordinate future responses to Morales.

MCKINLEY